

English Translation of the Address to the Ladies, Jalsa Salana 27th December 1982

Direct the believing men that they restrain their eyes and guard their private parts. That is purer for them. Surely Allah is well aware of what they do.

Also direct the believing women that they restrain their eyes and guard their private parts and that they display not their beauty and embellishments except that which is apparent thereof and that they draw their head coverings over their bosoms, and that they display not their beauty and embellishments thereof save to their husbands or to their fathers or the fathers of their husbands or their sons or the sons of their husbands or their brothers or the sons of their brothers or the sons of their sisters or their maidservants or what their right hands possess or such of male attendants as have no wickedness in them or young children who have not yet attained any concept of the private parts of women. And that walk not in a style that such of their beauty as they conceal is noticed. O believers! Then turn you to Allah altogether O believers so that you may prosper.

The Holy Quran. Al Nur [The Light]: 31, 32.

I have recited these verses because I was feeling that among the misfortunes falling on Islam, the greatest misfortune is that of going without Purdah. This misfortune is preying upon Muslims in different forms. In many countries, the Muslim woman is being deprived of Purdah. A few days ago, a Fatwa has been issued in some countries that Purdah is not only non-essential, it is forbidden, a taboo.

When I examined the state of affairs of Ahmadi women, I found with profound sorrow and grief that a few Ahmadi ladies have even sided with the female violators of Purdah in this field. Hence I realised the necessity of pronouncing Jihad in respect of Purdah among Ahmadi ladies everywhere.

If the Ahmadi ladies too deserted this field, which women in the world will uphold the right of Islamic Purdah? Various excuses are being presented in this regard but the major excuse is that of the Chador.¹ It is a pity that this Chador is entirely contrary to Purdah. No doubt Purdah could be observed with Chador, but it is essential to clarify the circumstances in which this could be considered proper Purdah.

After pondering over *The Holy Quran*, the Ahadith, and the sayings of the divines of the Muslim world, it has been concluded that in view of the various conditions and of different urgencies, Islam does expect different kinds of Purdah from its votaries. To illustrate, in the villages, the Chador is used for Purdah by drawing a corner of it over the face. It does contain modesty. This is not an exceptional Purdah; rather it is a part of the basic Islamic ideology. *The Holy Quran* explains it, and the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of God be on him) has elaborated it in detail, and the Promised Messiah (peace be on him) has also narrated in the translations of the verses that I have just recited.

¹ A full-body-length shawl held closed at the neck by hand or pin. It covers the head and the body but leaves the face completely visible. [Translator].

One [form of] Purdah in Islam is this that the face be covered from both sides including the chin and the forehead completely, and such makeup should be avoided that may instigate an evil-minded person. Those women who come out (of homes) for human necessities with dignity and modesty, without any makeup and adornment, they are observing Islamic Purdah. It is not an exemption. This Purdah is within the law. Therefore, giving this very explanation, the Promised Messiah (peace be on him) has said that this Purdah cannot be cumbersome and a burden upon the Europeans, because in their society women have very much advanced in economic affairs and they have become a part and parcel of their economics. Therefore they have to come out. If the European woman observes this form of Purdah, the Promised Messiah says that she is observing the exact Islamic Purdah.

Purdah of the face is part and parcel of the basis of Islamic Purdah. But for which society? The part of our society which is called rich and wealthy, which is in general terminology called an advanced society, who have lots of means for comfort and luxury, it is this society that has been enjoined to cover their faces, should not put makeup on while going out and observe Purdah of the entire face. The Burqa too is a means of Purdah. Nevertheless, it is the duty of the Caliph to make administrative decisions in accordance with the circumstances. If the adoption of the Chador in place of Burqa does not violate the Islamic Purdah, then it is all right. But if the adoption of Chador creates any risk of doing away with Purdah itself, then it is not right in any circumstances, and if the Caliph of the time does not take necessary steps in such a state of affairs then he would have to answer to Allah, the Exalted.

We have witnessed among the family of the Promised Messiah (peace be on him) Hazrat Ammajan and her children. The children of Hazrat Promised Messiah and those of Hazrat Mirza Bashir Ahmad who were wearing Burqa, yet despite this they were not barred from taking part in the tasks of the world. They acquired education and enjoyed recreation. But in this period the women using Chador for Purdah are making fun of it. They observe Purdah in the presence of their acquaintances, but in front of strangers, the Chador slides to the shoulders from the heads. Who can call this an Islamic Purdah?

Ladies to adopt piety. I have been favoured with the position to supervise them. I would, therefore, like to clarify explicitly that I cannot take for granted the present day Purdah of Chador as Islamic Purdah, even if you fabricate millions of excuses for its admissibility. Islamic values are being smashed and no care is taken of the ultimate condition of the future generations. Your coming generation would indulge in music and dancing and such lewdness would prevail that you cannot even imagine it.

There are some societies where shamelessness is common, where the concept of nakedness is entirely different. Women there walk with naked arms, bare faces and go to the extent of exposing such parts of their body that a person is astonished to witness the extent of degradation of the society. In these societies the Muslim ladies adopt Islamic values after accepting Ahmadiyyat. Even if they do not cover their faces, still they observe such Purdah with Chador that their virtuous character and nobility are obviously seen by the entire society. Their attitude is not instigative but it repels the evil eyes. In such societies, a Chador is the exact Islamic Purdah. Hence in various circumstances, keeping in view the different backgrounds, Islamic decisions have to be made and as explained, there is possibility of all these matters in Islam.

There is another Purdah and that is of 'People of the Household' which is more strict than the ordinary one.² They have been enjoined by Allah the Exalted in *The Holy Quran*, that it is better for them to remain in their homes as far as possible, but if they go out they have to cover themselves completely.

These three kinds of Purdah, are the Islamic Purdah and have been in vogue in various circumstances, but the ladies of the Jamaat are not permitted to adopt whatever form they wish to take and violate Islamic Purdah.

About the restriction put this year: for limiting the stage tickets only to those ladies who observe Islamic Purdah. To sit on the stage is not the prerogative of highly modern society. Its criterion is righteousness. It is the right of those who offer sacrifice. In this respect, wherever Purdah with Chador is strictly carried out, they are permitted to do so, yet the decision rests with the administration of the Jamaat. Nevertheless, to observe Purdah with Burqa is easier than with Chador.

Our Baji Jan had strict attitude regarding Purdah from the beginning, as she observed Hazrat Musleh Maud [the second Caliph] all her life and acted upon his directives. Hearing her discourses and witnessing her way of life, a few used to call her very old fashioned and some dubbed her insane. I knew only the old fashioned period of Hazrat Muhammad Mustafa (peace and blessings of God be on him). Anyhow, when our Baji Jan practiced strictness regarding stage tickets, she had to hear harsh things from some women which made her sad and grieved. I told her not to be sad but pour all her troubles on me and I would bear all this strife. She should carry out these injunctions fearlessly as I myself am responsible for these directives.

I am the servant of one who initiated Islam and introduced Purdah. I consider myself nothing. I am the servant of the servants, full of faults and weak, I do not know why this position has been conferred upon me. Whatever I am, whether weak or otherwise, at any rate I must try to perform the responsibilities connected with this rank. I am afraid of being questioned by Allah the Exalted after my demise.

Various motives are attributed towards the introduction of different injunctions. For instance, when the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be on him) distributed the booty among the immigrants from Mecca at the victory of Mecca and the hosts of Medina were deprived of it, the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of God be on him) clarified his motive by stating that he would not settle in his native town but rather would return among his brothers, the hosts.

The father of a girl, in a letter, had accused me of injustice in this respect. At first I thought of replying to him, but then I reflected that when one turns upon the Caliph of the time, then the case is with the Master of the Heaven. Hence my reaction was that the decision rested with Allah, the Exalted, alone.

I am becoming strict as I observe that our generations are entering a very dangerous period.

² An Quranic term used for the families of the Prophets. [Translator].

It is so dangerous that if these generations are not rectified, their progeny would go so far away from Islam that the present generation would see them with regret and despite making all efforts they would not be able to bring them back. All these efforts are being launched to purify Islamic society. Allah the Exalted has said so in *The Holy Quran* and these verses of *The Holy Quran* were forcing me to do so. There are such occurrences before me, particularly taking place in foreign countries that even Pakistani ladies are being affected by them and have violated the law of Purdah. Then a grievous event, like an ulcer, is that an Ahmadi girl has embraced Christianity. This event has upset me heart and made me restless.

At times even things permitted have to be abandoned for the sake of God. There are going to arise some needs that you have to prepare yourselves for even greater sacrifices than this. Some injunctions may not have any relationship with religion, yet responding to the call of the Imam of the time; Ahmadi ladies have offered such sacrifices which make one wonderstruck. Before the establishment of Pakistan, in support of the Muslim League, Hazrat Musleh Maud directed that the Muslim League has to be helped at all cost because without this help, Pakistan could not come into existence. Hence on the voting day, a lady insisted on going to vote. She had delivered a baby just a few days ago and her family members told her not to go because of her health. Yet she persisted so her family locked her in the house and left. She screamed and got the neighbours to break the lock and went to vote. Some people, returning from the voting, noticed blood near a bush. They approached near and found this lady bleeding and lying unconscious. She had responded to the call of the Imam even at the expense of risking her life. She was taken to her home on a stretcher.

Another touching incident of sacrifice: Hazrat Musleh Maud had exhorted Ahmadies to enrol themselves in the army for the protection of their country. A widow had only one son. When he did not offer himself to enlist in the army, his mother shouted at him and said ‘Why don't you respond? Have you not heard the voice of the Caliph of the time?’ So her son offered himself for the army. This impressed Hazrat Musleh Maud very much and he supplicated to Allah, praying: *O my Master, this widow has only one son and she is passed the age of childbearing. If Thou hast to take a sacrifice, I pray, do not take the sacrifice of this widow's son. I present one of my own sons as sacrifice.*

I exhort the ladies to note that this is a sacrifice worth its name. If the Ahmadi daughters would turn their backs because of these hardships then my sense of honour discloses to me that Allah does not need them; if one will go away, God shall favour us with hundreds who will be more obedient, more protectors of their chastity and more sincere to God and His religion. If, God forbid, I had to excommunicate any Ahmadi lady for this reason then the grief of my heart would be on them. Would the Caliph of the time not feel the pain of this action? The Community of the faithful are like one body. When one part is in trouble, the whole body supplicates with humility and tears to Allah the Exalted to secure it from that situation. I also pray against such a day when any one Ahmadi is lost through my hand. Nevertheless, if it is destined then I would not mind the grief of my heart for it.

I have been entrusted with a position for which Allah is always zealous and shall ever be zealous. There has never been a single day when the Caliphate was devoid of Allah's help and support. I am very humble, despised, contemptible, yet the office of the Caliphate has been conferred upon me. If you will prove yourselves true in your pledge of allegiance, the

angels of Allah shall help you. Just think of the servants of God you are the offspring of? The protection of grand values has been entrusted to you.

The mothers of the faithful, while keeping themselves in Purdah had rendered grand services. There is the heroic incident of Hazrat Khawlah [bint al-Azwart] as an example who displayed great valour in the battlefield. When Hazrat Khalid ibn Waleed, the commander-in-chief demanded the removal of the covering from the face, she disclosed that she was not a man and she cannot show her face.

It is also true that more warmth is felt in Burqa, but in the early period of Islam, the Muslim women happily bore the most awful persecution under intense heat for the sake of God. This bit of a sacrifice is nothing. Greater sacrifices would be required for Islam. I am seeing that the speed of the caravan of Islam is to increase from fast to faster. You should engage yourselves in prayers and seek His forgiveness.

In conclusion, I would mention a girl who had said to one of her female relatives that the strictness in Purdah which His Holiness has embarked upon, shall not last long and this strictness will meet with failure. It shall work and must most certainly work. It is the word of Allah. It is the saying of Hazrat Muhammad Mustafa (peace and blessings of God be on him) and it shall be carried out at all cost and we shall carry it out at all costs. As long as there is the last drop of blood within us, we shall carry it out and certainly it shall be carried out.

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